

FY 2002 ANNUAL REPORT
TO THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY



Prepared by
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the permanent establishment of the Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) in October 2001, the Office has made tremendous efforts to engage different Asian and Pacific Islander (API) ethnic groups, to keep abreast of their needs and concerns. One of its missions is to bridge the communication gap between the District government/service providers and their API constituents. In FY 2002 OAPIA worked with over 20 community organizations and participated in over 200 community events. Outreach activities primarily aim to accomplish two objectives: 1) to ensure the involvement of API community in governmental events and proceedings; and, 2) to inform the community about available government services and programs.

OAPIA has organized and facilitated public and private programs on public safety, human rights, economic development, housing, employment, social services, public health, transportation, education, and multi-cultural development.

Through OAPIA's coordination, agency responsibilities are clearly defined in Agency Action Plans on how to improve services to APIs with limited English proficiency. Quarterly agency-wide meetings are now held to discuss the progress in five specific areas: 1) document translations, 2) hiring of bilingual API staff, 3) multi-cultural sensitivity training, 4) community outreach, and 5) formation of partnerships with community-based organizations.

One of the on-going challenges of OAPIA is obtaining adequate funding and staffing resources to better serve the API community. The needs of the increasing API population continue to exceed OAPIA's available resources. Although this Administration has made tremendous progress to improve API community's access to city services through the establishment of OAPIA, this office hopes that each of the District agencies will develop its own long-term plan and programs to meet the needs of the immigrant community-at-large and the Federal Title VI requirement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Within the last decade, the District of Columbia (DC) has become increasingly more diverse. According to recent reports from the Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy Brookings Greater Washington Research Program, the Washington metropolitan area was the 5th most common destination for legal immigrants to the U.S. Between 1990 and 1998, nearly one quarter of a million immigrants from 193 countries and territories chose the Washington metropolitan areas as their intended residence. The District's Adams Morgan/ Mt. Pleasant area ranks second on the list of top 10 immigrant destinations in the Washington metropolitan area, with residents coming from 136 different countries. Unlike most immigration trends, 42 % of the area's recent immigrants came from Asia, surpassing the number of Latin American immigrants which constitute 31.5% of the area's immigrants.

The 2000 Census indicates that the population of Asians and Pacific Islanders (API) in DC has increased between 39% (Asian only) and 66% (Asian in combination with some other race), which is the fastest growing rate of any minority ethnic group. According to the Washington Post, APIs own almost two-thirds of the small business licenses in DC. Most of these APIs are first generation immigrants with language and cultural barriers and require assistance to gain access to government programs and services. Census information also shows that 8,974 of the District's API population speak an Asian language at home and half of them cannot speak English 'very well.' Information obtained from DC Public Schools (DCPS) indicates that two-thirds of the API students in DCPS are either non-English proficient or limited English proficient (LEP). As the District's API community continues to grow, the communication divide between the District government/service providers and their API constituents continues to increase. The Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) was created to bridge this divide and connect the District government to its API constituents.

Created in 1987, OAPIA was part of the Executive Office of the Mayor until October 2001, when it became an independent agency through D.C. Act 14-85, "District of Columbia's Asian and Pacific Islander Community Development Act 2000." OAPIA's mission is to ensure that the full range of health, education, employment, and social services are available to the API community in DC. OAPIA advises the Mayor, the Council and other agencies within the District of Columbia Government on the views, needs, and concerns of the District's fastest growing minority group. OAPIA works with all levels of government to ensure the delivery of information and services to the API Community. OAPIA has an Executive Director who oversees the daily office operation and supervises its staff. Working with the Director are two other full-time employees: an Outreach Coordinator who is trilingual and a Program Specialist who is bilingual. Due to the varied and specific language needs of the API community, many responsibilities are shared among all staff members. Under the leadership of the Executive Director, staff members organize and facilitate public and private programs on public safety, human rights, economic development, housing, employment, social services, public health, transportation, education, and multi-cultural development.

OAPIA hopes to fulfill its mission through advocacy, collaboration with community organizations, community outreach, and work with government agencies to increase access to government services and programs for residents with limited English proficiency as directed in the Mayor's Asian and Pacific Islander Initiative. The following sections will give an overview

of OAPIA's activities and accomplishments in reference to advocacy, collaboration with community-based organizations, community outreach and the Mayor's API Initiative.

II. ADVOCACY

OAPIA serves as the primary agency for the Mayor and the city government to address issues of concern to the API community. It intercedes on behalf of the diverse API population such as at-risk children, seniors, small business owners, immigrants with limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities by providing assistance to those in need of the District's services. OAPIA also assists APIs in resolving civil right and discrimination cases.

OAPIA gives voices to API residents who cannot speak for themselves. Since OAPIA's permanent establishment in October 2001, OAPIA has assisted APIs in a number of complaint cases on small business practices, vendor issues, public safety, public education, civil rights, hate crimes, and discrimination by bringing API concerns to the attention of District agencies for resolution. OAPIA continues to aid dozens of API individuals including new immigrants, the unemployed, homeless, children, parents, and merchants.

III. COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

OAPIA addresses community problems and responds to requests through close collaborations with community organizations and government agencies. Within fiscal year 2002, OAPIA worked with over 20 community organizations and participated in over 200 community events. OAPIA has made tremendous efforts to engage different API ethnic groups, to keep abreast of their needs and concerns. OAPIA staff members spend four hours a week to provide on-site assistance at API community-based organizations to learn from first hand experience about the needs of the API community. OAPIA, in turn, communicates the API community issues with government/agency representatives and, with their help, seeks ways to resolve the community's problems. Most importantly, OAPIA keeps the line of communication open between the API residents and the D.C. government. The following is a summary of some activities OAPIA had organized and events OAPIA collaborated with API community leaders and organizations to ensure that the API community's needs and requests are addressed:

- **API Meeting with Chief Ramsey (10/22/01):** OAPIA facilitated a meeting between Chief Ramsey and API community leaders to discuss recruitment of more API officers, multi-cultural training, rise of hate crimes against South Asian Americans since 9/11, and support Asian Liaison Unit (ALU in Chinatown) which was in need of more officers. The meeting resulted in the detailing of three more API officers to ALU.
- **The Mayor's coffee meeting with national and local API leaders (10/31/01):** During the Mayor's coffee meeting with 18 API leaders, the Mayor had an opportunity to listen to the community issues and emerging needs after the 9/11 attacks. This is the second coffee meeting since September when the Mayor met 13 leaders of Asian American community national organizations. The attendees complimented the mayor for inclusion of the API community in addressing city's priorities. The major issues addressed were: 1) necessity on equal representation and participation of Asians and Pacific Islanders, 2) needs for bilingual services, 3) more multicultural sensitivity training for law enforcement officers, and 4) recruitment of more bilingual employees for the city government, especially for Metro Police Department (MPD).

- **API business community Meeting with Deputy Mayor Eric Price's office (11/01):** To follow up on community issues raised with the Mayor at several events concerning economic impact to small businesses and displaced workers since September 11, OAPIA arranged a meeting with the office of Deputy Mayor on Planning and Economic Development. Elchino Martin, Chief of Staff of the Deputy Mayor and three senior staff members briefed the community on the Mayor's initiatives and available relief programs. Representative of DOES along with the representatives of DC Emergency Assistance Fund and Change Inc. introduced their programs and responded to some questions. Elchino Martin also introduced the Mayor's plan to boost the economy in DC. Among the community organizations, which attended the meeting, were Chinatown Service Center, Boat People SOS, Korean American Coalition, and five ethnic newspapers.
- **API meeting on emergency needs (11/08/01):** OAPIA organized a community meeting to address the economic impact of September 11th on small businesses and displaced workers. During the forum, representatives from the Office of Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, Commission on Banking, and Office of Chief Financial Officer briefed API community representatives on the Mayor's initiatives and available relief programs. Representative of the Department of Employment Services and D.C. Emergency Assistance Fund and Change Inc. introduced their programs and responded to questions from the community.
- **Merchant Meeting with the Mayor (12/14/01):** OAPIA assisted Ward 4 merchants in meeting with the Mayor and provided translation services. Our services enabled Korean merchants to breach the language barriers to better communicate with the Mayor about their plans to establish a business association in the District and to seek the Mayor's support in this venture.
- **Meeting with Dept. of Mental Health Officials (3/02):** In response to concerns expressed by community-based organizations regarding the lack of bilingual API social worker at a mental health facility, OAPIA facilitate a meeting between Department of Mental Health officials and community leaders. As a result of the meeting, Department of Mental Health has committed to hiring a full-time Vietnamese bilingual social worker for the facility.
- **Korean American Business Association (KABA) meeting with MPD 6D commander (3/02):** OAPIA facilitated a meeting on 3/29 between the Korean American Business Association (KABA) and 6D Commander Dandridge to address the complaints about 911 calls responding time. 6D has agreed to develop literature to educate merchants and residents about processing and prioritizing 911 calls. KABA has 350 members, most of whom owns businesses in DC. Following the meeting, OAPIA provided info and advice to KABA concerning future community outreach efforts and organization structure.
- **Meeting with Chinatown restaurants and DOH (5/02):** In response to misunderstanding and violations of Department of Health regulations, OAPIA assisted DOH in organizing a workshop on sanitation and food safety for Chinatown restaurants. Ten restaurants attended the training facilitated by DOH food inspectors and rodent control officers. OAPIA assisted in getting restaurants to participate and interpreting during the training. Free videotapes and literature on food safety were provided to local restaurants. The participants recommended more workshops for other restaurants and kitchen workers.
- **Meeting between Boat People SOS and DC Housing Authority (9/02):** OAPIA invited a representative from DC Housing Authority to Boat People SOS, one of the major community based organizations in Vietnamese community to brief on the housing

assistance needs of the community. As a result, DC Housing Authority agreed to conduct quarterly on-site assistance for the area's residents.

- **Meeting between street vendors and DCRA (10/02):** OAPIA has received complaints from DC Roadway Vendors about the lack of response by the involved government agencies (DCRA, MPD) and the lottery drawing process. OAPIA attended this month vendor lottery to speak to concerned vendors, as well as facilitated a meeting between food and merchandise roadway vendors. The roadway vendors requested to meet with the Director of DCRA. OAPIA requested DCRA Vendor coordinator to organize a meeting. Most vendors are Vietnamese and Koreans.

IV. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Due to language and cultural barriers encountered by most of the District's API community, outreach to the API community must be approached by a more grass root method. OAPIA, through the language capabilities of its staff, can directly communicate and serve Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese-speaking clients. These three languages represent the largest linguistically isolated Asian ethnic groups in the city. Outreach activities aim to accomplish two objectives: 1) to ensure the involvement of API community in governmental events and proceedings; and, 2) to inform the community about available government services and programs.

To engage more APIs to participate in government events, OAPIA staff visited many API residents, merchants and community-based organizations. OAPIA actively involved the participation of Asian ethnic media, most of who located in suburban areas, to report District-based programs and running public announcements of city events in their newspapers. Many of OAPIA's activities and accomplishments were featured in several newspapers, including the Washington Post, Asian Fortune (English), World Journal (Chinese), Korea Times (Korean), and other ethnic news media such as Vietnamese American Television. The success of OAPIA's outreach efforts is reflected by the APIs' participation during District government events.

OAPIA'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH INITIATIVE

- **Mayor's API Community Fair & Town Hall Meeting (11/14/01):** The Mayor's API Community Fair and the Town Hall Meeting on November 14 was a great success. The event boasted 30 information booths, 10 different workshops, and a health fair. More than 500 APIs attended the event, and over 20 DC agencies sent their employees and bilingual staff to assist community members to learn more about city programs. Dozens of community volunteers, including the API commissioners, helped during the event. Several media organization, including Cable TV, Korea Times, World Journal, Chinese American News, The Korea Central Daily, and Asian Fortune came to report on the event. API participants were very pleased to see a lot of information in different Asian languages, including timely information on anthrax. Simultaneous translation services were provided during the workshops and at the Town Hall meeting.
- **Lunar New Year Celebration (2/19/02):** On 2/19, Mayor Williams hosted his first Lunar New Year Celebration in conjunction with DC Commission on API Affairs. Over 100 people attended the celebration, including API community members from various ethnic groups, DC government officials, DC Commissioner, and ethnic news media. Commissioner Parag Mehta emceed the celebration. Eight ethnic groups participated in

the fashion show. Representatives from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing presented the Mayor with the Lucky Money for the Year of the Horse.

- **Asian Heritage Month Celebration & Bilingual Job Fair (4/02):** In honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, OAPIA collaborated with the DC Commission on API Affairs, government and private agencies to organize an Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Celebration and a Bilingual Job Fair, both of which were held on May 29, 2002. Due to outreach efforts by OAPIA, about 150 people, predominantly Korean Americans, came to the Bilingual Career Fair participated by 17 DC agencies. Asian ethnic media covered both events.
- **Mayor's Visit to the Vietnamese Community (4/24/02):** Over a hundred Vietnamese residents came out to greet the Mayor warmly during his community walk on Park Road, NW, where he visited Vietnamese grocery stores, an immigrant home, and two major community organizations. Local residents had an opportunity to speak to the Mayor about their concerns and expressed their appreciation to the Mayor for what he had done. Two community-based organizations, Boat People SOS and Asian American LEAD, briefed the Mayor about their programs and services. The news of the Mayor's visit was publicized in the DC area's Asian ethnic media sources and also in California and Texas.
- **Ward 7 Merchant Workshop (4/02):** Partnered with Marshall Heights Community Development Organization, OAPIA hosted a workshop for merchants with language barriers to learn about various issues related to business regulations, access to government resources, landlord/tenant relationships, racial relationships, and public safety. The District 6 Police Department, Ward 7 Neighborhood Action and its Core team, and community based organizations participated in the workshop.
- **Ward 5 Florida Market Merchant Workshop (8/02):** OAPIA coordinated a workshop on business regulations and public safety for Florida Market area merchants in conjunction with H Street Community Development Corporation. Government representatives from the Department of Health, the Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs, the Department of Public Works, the Metropolitan Police Department, and the U.S. Attorney's Office were present, along with community leaders from organizations, such as Action for Peace through Prayer & Aid and the Chinatown Service Center. Prior to the workshop, OAPIA conducted a survey to assess the current situation at the market and to determine the pertinent issues that need to be discussed.
- **Ward 8 Merchant Workshop (10/02):** The Ward 8 Merchants' workshop, cosponsored by Ward 8 Neighborhood Services Office and OAPIA, was well attended by both Government representatives and the merchants. About a dozen Korean American merchants and several business community leaders came to the workshop. John Tinpe, the chair of the Commission on Office of Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs, Siu Cheng, Community volunteer, and Sunny Shin, the president of Korean American Business Association also came to speak about customer service and community relations. Government representatives from MPD, DPW, DCRA, DOH, FEMS, ABRA, and US Attorney's office made presentations about Safety and business related updates. During the workshop, OAPIA provided Korean interpretation.

PARTICIPATION IN CITY-WIDE MAYORAL EVENTS

- **Citizen Summit II (10/6/01):** Due to the Mayor's commitment of providing interpretation services to residents with limited English proficiency, OAPIA's tremendous outreach efforts and community support, the API community was represented at the Citizen Summit II held on October 6. While API residents account for

less than 4% of the city population, 8-10% of the total participants were identified as APIs. It was unprecedented that the API community demonstrated such tremendous interest and support of this Administration. OAPIA provided on-site assistance to many API participants with limited English proficiency, especially in registration, table discussions, and other logistics. Over a hundred API residents with language barriers sitting at 12 designated tables were able to participate in the discussions through simultaneous interpretation and bilingual facilitators.

- **State of the District Address (3/1/02):** The Mayor's State of the District Address was well attended by API community. Approximately 50 APIs, including dozens of community leaders, commissioners and Wah Luck house senior citizens attended the event. Several ethnic media, such as Korea Times and Capitol Vietnamese News came to report on the event.
- **Mayor's Ward 1 Town Hall Meeting (6/17/02):** OAPIA provided outreach assistance for Mayor Williams' Ward 1 Town Hall Meeting. Approximately 50 API Ward 1 residents attended the meeting. Through the use of simultaneous translations, two API residents were able to talk to the Mayor about the difficulties they encountered trying to obtain Section VIII housing.

In an effort to bridge the information gap between District government agencies and the API community, OAPIA works with agencies and community-based organizations to bring needed information directly to the community. Throughout this past year, OAPIA has conducted four merchant workshops in conjunction with various public and private agencies. These workshops provide relevant information, such as business regulations, access to government resources, landlord/tenant relationships, racial relationships, and public safety to local merchants with language barriers. Over 100 business owners, community members, and government personnel have attended these workshops since their inception. In response to misunderstanding and violations of Department of Health (DOH) regulations, OAPIA assisted DOH in organizing a workshop on sanitation and food safety for Chinatown restaurant employees. Ten restaurants participated in the training facilitated by DOH food inspectors and rodent control officers. OAPIA assisted in the recruiting restaurants participation and interpretation during the training. Free videotapes and literature on food safety were provided to local restaurants. On October 17, 2002, OAPIA partnered with Social Security Administration (SSA) to organize its first Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Community Forum in greater Washington DC area. Approximately 60 API community leaders, organization representatives, and several of ethnic newspapers attended the event. The OAPIA organized a Housing workshop in conjunction with Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) at Chinatown Service Center on December 17, 2002. Representatives from Housing Counseling Services and DHCD presented information about affordable housing programs, basic overview on purchasing a home, and fair housing programs. On January 10, 2002, OAPIA and DC Housing Authority co-sponsored a workshop about DC government's housing assistance programs. During the workshop over 25 people signed up for DC housing programs.

To promote better and more efficient outreach to the API community, OAPIA produced and distributed its first brochure this past February. In April, OAPIA developed and disseminated its first monthly E-Newsletter to approximately 500 APIs in the Metropolitan area. OAPIA E-Newsletter contains information on community and government events, job and internship announcements, grant opportunity and relevant announcements. OAPIA continues to provide the monthly E-Newsletter to the API community.

The success of OAPIA's outreach lies in OAPIA's close collaboration with local API community-based organizations and District agencies and the assurances that every OAPIA-sponsored and assisted events are guaranteed to have simultaneous interpretation.

V. MAYOR'S API INITIATIVE

In spring 2000, through the Office of Personnel (DCOP) and OAPIA, Mayor Williams conducted a language survey to assess 14 agencies' abilities to provide equal access to services to LEP APIs. The results indicated an evident lack of bilingual API staff, as well as a lack of documents translated into API languages. The Metropolitan Police Department had the most bilingual staff with two Chinese-speaking, two Korean-speaking, and two Vietnamese-speaking employees. Most agencies had one to three API bilingual employees, while some did not have any. To ensure equal access to government services to the LEP APIs, Mayor Williams requested those 14 major service agencies to participate in his Initiative on Asians & Pacific Islanders, which marked the beginning of a city-wide and systematic approach to address the needs of the underserved API community. Mayor Williams also designated OAPIA to administer and coordinate the implementation of this plan.

Since the inception of the Initiative, this plan has now expanded to 17 participating agencies:

- Office of Aging (DCOA)
- Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA)*
- Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs (DCRA)
- Department of Employment Services (DOES)
- Fire & Emergency Management Services (FEMS)
- Department of Health (DOH)
- Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD)
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Department of Mental Health (DMH)*
- Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
- Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR)
- Office of Personnel (DCOP)
- Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)
- Department of Public Works (DPW)
- D.C. Public Library (DCPL)
- Office of Tax & Revenue (OTR)
- District Department of Transportation (DDOT)*

* Not one of the original 14 agencies

Through OAPIA's coordination, agency responsibilities have been clearly defined, report formats standardized, operating procedures developed, reporting system streamlined, and regular meetings scheduled. Each of the seventeen participating agencies has provided an annual Agency Action Plan on how to improve services to LEP APIs in five specific areas: document translations, hiring of bilingual API staff, multi-cultural sensitivity training, community outreach, and creating partnerships with community-based organizations. OAPIA has organized quarterly

agency-wide meetings to discuss the progress in those five areas, to update agencies on any news or problems, to offer suggestions, and to act as a resource. Each agency also has a designated API coordinator, who is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Agency Action Plan, reporting the agency's progress at the agency-wide meetings, and submitting a quarterly status report to the Mayor through OAPIA. Various agency heads attend the monthly Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs' meetings to update the Commission on the status of their agencies' Action Plan.

Since the days when the language survey was first conducted, great strides have been made in all five areas of the Initiative:

- **Document Translations:** Vital materials, such as West Nile fact sheet (DOH), and the Miranda Rights (MPD), and the Smoke Detector pamphlet (FEMS), have been translated into Korean, Chinese, and/or Vietnamese. DOH has increased the number of translated materials in Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese from five in 2000 to 31 in 2001.
- **Diversifying the Workforce:** Bilingual, sometimes multi-lingual, personnel have been hired by a number of agencies. Asian newspapers, such as the Korea Times, Asian Fortune, and many others, have been used as a medium to seek Asian applicants.
- **Multi-cultural Sensitivity Training:** DCRA, DHS, DOES, and DPR have had cultural awareness trainings for front-line employees. DPW and two other agencies have offered specialized cultural awareness education of the Asian community.
- **Community Partnerships:** National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, the Korean American Coalition, Chinatown Steering Committee, and the Asian Service Center are examples of organizations that now work with D.C. agencies to communicate with the Asian community and/or cosponsor events.
- **Community Outreach:** Events, such as the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month celebrations, town hall meetings, and community outreach days, and informational seminars, such as those conducted by DOH investigators and DCRA officials, recognize and serve the API community.
- Not one of the original fourteen agencies

VI. CONCLUSION

In FY 2002 the Williams Administration has made tremendous progress to improve city services to include the API community, but there is still much more to be done. As the District becomes increasingly diverse, the District government must also evolve to meet the needs of its residents. OAPIA is only a temporary bridge between a diverse and growing community, the City Council and the District government. It is our hope that, eventually, each of the District agencies will develop its own long-term plan and programs to meet the needs of the immigrant community-at-large and the Federal Title VI requirement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Currently, this Administration is also reviewing federal and local policies and best practices around the country in an effort to develop a holistic and long-term plan so that all residents with special needs have equal access to city services. The needs of the increasing API population continue to exceed OAPIA's available resources. One of the on-going challenges of OAPIA is obtaining adequate funding and staffing resources to better serve the API community. Until then, OAPIA continues to work with the City Council, District agencies, and community-based organizations to fulfill our city's promise of serving all its residents, regardless of cultural or language barriers.